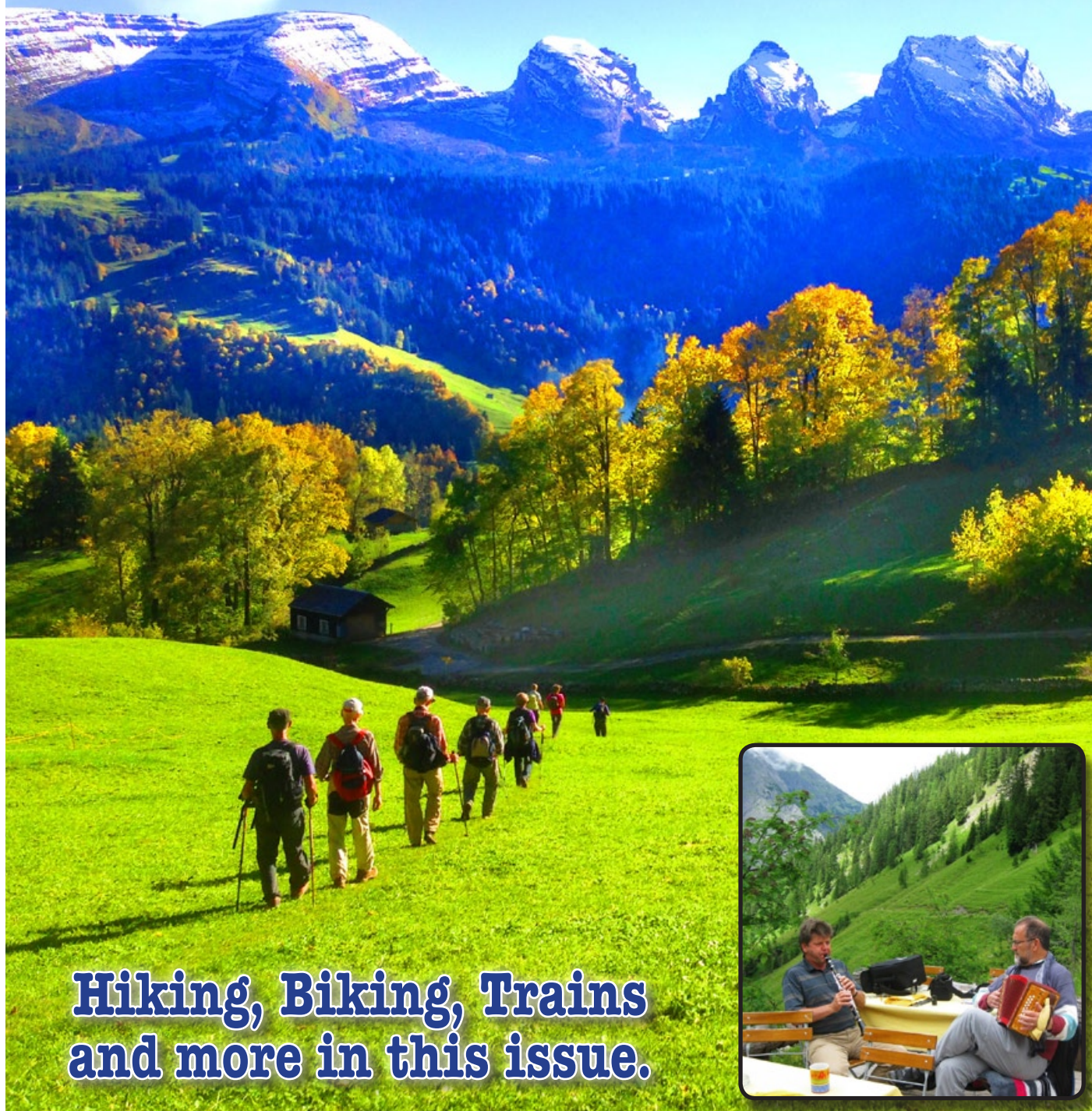




News **BULLETIN**

Produced by and for members of the Servas community

Want to Hike the Swiss Mountains?



**Hiking, Biking, Trains
and more in this issue.**

VISIT...

LANZAROTE
Caliente.COM



Produced by and for members of the Servas community.

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See You in November?

SI Exco plans the next SI Conference and General Assembly (a physical/virtual meeting) on November 21–26 2022 if the covid-19 situation allows. Details will soon be posted on a specific web page on servas.org.

Are you the person for the Job?

**SI EXCO is in urgent need of a Finance Manager
and a Head of Servas UN volunteers...**

Please tell us if you are the right one for either job. Thank you.

SI EXCO Seeks a SICOGA Finance Manager

**By Jonny Sågänger,
President, Servas International**

Servas International (SI) is urgently seeking a volunteer to work as the FINANCE MANAGER for the next SI Conference and General Assembly (SICOGA). The responsibilities of this role are as follows:

1. Work with (national) member group teams to build a budget for the next SICOGA.
2. Work with SI EXCO to get budget approved.
3. Attend periodic SICOGA (planning and execution) team meetings.
4. Work with SICOGA (planning and execution) team to monitor and account for SICOGA registration receipts from members.
5. Work with member group teams to monitor and approve expenses against budget.
6. Work with SI Treasurer to arrange for payments for authorized expenses.
7. Reconcile and present the SICOGA accounts to SI Treasurer, and SI EXCO as needed.

This position will start immediately and will end after the next SICOGA when the accounting for the event is complete.

Please write to Treasurer@Servas.Org indicating your interest. The current SI Treasurer is Radha B. Radhakrishna.



Volunteer Opportunity: Servas International UN Coordinator

Would you like to play a pivotal role in Servas International's initiatives with the United Nations? After several years of diligent work as SI's UN Coordinator, Servas France member Danielle Serres is stepping down.

Servas has had "consultative status" with the UN's Economic and Social Council for nearly 50 years. SI may select five Servas members to be SI representatives at each of three UN locations (New York, Geneva, Vienna).

Reporting to SI's Executive Committee (ExCo), the Servas International UN Coordinator coordinates the collective work of SI representatives to the UN. Key responsibilities are:

- Recruiting and training new SI representatives to the UN
- Supplying to the SI reps relevant information on the UN and UN-related events
- Collaboration with SI reps across the three UN locations
- Preparing or endorsing oral and written statements submitted to the UN by SI reps
- Administrative tasks related to SI's involvement with the UN
- Establishing partnerships with NGOs

For more info or to submit an application, please email your resume (including names and contact information of three references) to Kent Macaulay, kentmacaulay3@gmail.com by January 25, 2022. Then a short-list of candidates will be interviewed.

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Want to promote equality and empowerment of women?

United Nations Commission on the Status of Women — UN CSW66

March 14th to 25th, 2022

By Paige LaCombe, SI Peace Secretary

Priority theme: Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk-reduction policies and programs.

UN Women is the [United Nations](#) entity promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women works to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide. Each non-government organization (NGO) which has consultative status with ECOSOC (the UN's Economic and Social Council) can have delegates to the UN Women's CSW66.

Due to COVID-19, delegates of NGOs will attend all or most CSW66 sessions virtually. There is no fee to attend. For more information about the CSW66 go to [CSW66 \(2022\) | Commission on the Status of Women | UN Women](#).

As an NGO member of ECOSOC, Servas International (SI) can select Servas members to be SI delegates at this virtual conference. The selection of SI delegates will be prioritized as follows:



Current SI Reps (New York, Geneva, Vienna), SI EXCO members and SI UN Coordinator

National Peace Secretaries and National Secretaries

All other current Servas members who have submitted a Statement of Intent and Interest (based on availability of spaces allowed by the UN).

If you are interested, please email to request information and forms, then send completed forms and papers to:

lacombe Paige@gmail.com.

The SI Peace Secretary must have this by January 10th, 2022.

Thank you for your interest and we look forward to working with you!
—Paige

...



Servas Youth Language Experience: SYLE 2022

At Lake Como: Jossy, Giulia, Aurora, Ester, Ale, of Servas youth Italy)



Servas Youth Language Experience, SYLE, will re-start in 2022!!

WHAT IS IT?

SYLE is an extended hosting for Youth, under 30 years old, in Servas homes. If you do not have young adult in your family, you can find some friends or neighbors to build a "hosting net".

HOW LONG?

1 to 4 weeks in different Servas families.

SYLE : not only a guest

Servas means to build peace through travelling and hosting. You are not an only a guest but an active family member. Visitors meet new people and friends, discover new places, and feel the atmosphere of daily life, while hosts can show their country and exchange ideas.

SYLE: not only to learn a language

We hope you will also volunteer in

the country you are going to visit, building peace day by day. It is always with other youngsters, together with the hosting families or other Servas friends.

Young adults 14 to 30 can apply (16+ for volunteering). For minors, Servas puts the parents in contact : parents/families have full responsibility to agree the terms and the duration of the SYLE.

How to apply:

If you are interested, get a form from, and send it completed to, servasgiovani@gmail.com, as soon as possible. Specify the languages you speak, plus the level of knowledge and the language in which you want to do the SYLE.



Anna and Paolo (Servas Giovani Italy) enjoying [perhaps?] a SYLE experience in Tblisi, Georgia.

Covid19 restrictions:

Before applying check the travelling situation to/ from your country. S.I. policy applies to SYLE, click here: <https://www.servas.org/en/news/covid-19-host-and-travel-policy-servas>

S.Y.L.E. + Volunteering in Italy – Summer 2022

Here are two opportunities for you, in Bergamo province, north Italy.

Registration: Get a form from, and send your self-presentation to, servasgiovani@gmail.com by March 2022, or earlier. Limited places for both.

Send your questions to: raffaella.rota2022@gmail.com or servasgiovani@gmail.com

1st opportunity : Summer Youth Centre: Bergamo province:

Do you want to be **ANIMATOR / EDUCATOR** with children and teenagers?

Together with a group of youngsters, you can organize activities/games in open air, swimming pool,

forest and lakes exploration. You can introduce your country, traditional games, food, and language.

**Age: +16 years old:
When? last week of June
and 1-2-3 weeks of July
2022**

Duration: 1 week of volunteering plus other 1 or 2 or 3 weeks of Servas hospitality in the same or in different towns (to be agreed)

2nd opportunity : Manage a TOWN FESTIVAL

In Bergamo province: with traditional food, fun and music. Together with a group of volunteers (youngsters and adults) you can help: cooking, or waiter/ waitress, or in games and animation.

**Age: +16 years old
When? 1-10 September
2022**

Duration: minimum 3 days of volunteering plus other 1 or 2 or 3 weeks of Servas hospitality -- in the same or in different towns (to be agreed).

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She's a Winner

By Alvany Santiago

Let's get to know one of the winners of the Second Writing Contest on Environment and Peace, run by Servas Brazil and Servas Portugal with sponsorship of Servas Brazil, Portugal, Canada and Ireland.

Maria Clara is a seventeen-year girl, who lives in northeast Brazil, in Bahia State. Clara has twin brothers and attends high school. She wrote:



"At the age of three I entered school, in fact it started a little earlier, my mother, being a teacher, taught me at home, she always encouraged me to read. From then, I started really enjoying reading, and

I've always liked the idea that books allow us to go beyond what our feet can reach."

As well as the writing contest, Clara said that joining *Women & Climate: Actions in Brazil*, during the **Cop 26**

has made her more aware that caring for the environment is everyone's responsibility.

Participating in the 2nd Environment and Peace Essay Contest in March 2020 and being one of the winners was for Clara "simply excellent". She was very surprised and happy when she knew the results. She liked the contest theme and she explained that there was nothing more promising and urgent than the environment and peace. Her essay title was "Environmental Impacts Amid Covid-19".

She discussed environmental disasters and how human actions impact nature, and how essential our care for it is, believing that through this care is a possible way to achieve peace.

Regarding *Women & Climate: Actions in Brazil*, a virtual meeting during COP 26 — UN Conference for Climate, Maria Clara stated: "I felt gratified to participate in a conversation circle with incredible women activists, who fight as women for improvements. It was another learning experience for all of us, where everyone was able to express their ideas, strategies, opinions, and especially their actions. A hope sprang up in me that there are still ways to save our planet from the losses caused by human's actions, preserving every species".

Link to Clara's essay:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1tOp7eofuweey4RULkiuOxZi1LmTTSP8dD0867pGYo/edit?usp=sharing>

Link to the contest report with the financial statement:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1BA9pGA5mDSqQXjLzKM8_MO5kUXT7IBP/edit?usp=sharing&oid=118147260384050211588&rtpof=true&sd=true

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COP26, Glasgow 2021

Scottish Servas Response to the Accommodation Challenge

By Giles Waley

In late October 2021 more than 30,000 delegates from all over the globe came to Glasgow to work together to address the climate change crisis. The UK Government's official provider secured accommodation which was significantly less than that required. Many delegations could afford Scotland's most expensive hotel and could even afford the inflated prices that opportunists were charging. Some had made bookings that turned out to be unavailable scams.

As the conference opening date approached the UK Government organisers advised that anyone without confirmed accommodation should not travel. This meant that some smaller

nations, with a vital interest in the consequences of climate change, risked being excluded from the proceedings. The sharp contrast between the circumstances of different delegations motivated Servas members in Scotland to respond.

Mary Alice, a long-standing Servas member living 20km south-west of Glasgow, was approached by Servas members in England well in advance of COP26. She began to coordinate accommodation for Quakers and hosted several participants herself.

In the end she found hosts for about 50 people, allocating some to Servas households. These





included Madagascans and a group of youth from Yorkshire who made a presentation, with their counterparts from South Africa, and met the Deputy Minister for the Environment.

June and Giles Waley, also long-standing Servas members, responded to the situation following a request from a Servas membership applicant to help the delegation from Burkina Faso. Four days before the conference

Photos: Previous page:
Burkina Faso delegates, including the EU Ambassador, waiting at the bus stop with high school pupils.

Top left:
The EU Ambassador cooking a traditional Burkinabe fish meal.

Left:
A traditional Scottish experience – a whisky night cap

Below left:
The start of a shared project between a Scottish school and one in Burkina Faso

Below:
Evening meals were delivered by friends of the Waleys. Cultural conversations and dish washing were shared.



began, thanks to social media and personal networks, beds were being offered. Immediately afterwards the first of 23 delegates arrived in their home, 30 km north-east of Glasgow, and in nearby villages. The Waleys hosted administrators, the EU Ambassador and her press officer and two senior civil servants.

The duration of COP26 was the most exceptional and busy two weeks of their lives with challenging accommodation and travel logistics. Their home became a hub for the provision of warm clothes, meals and general advice and support. Packed lunches were provided after one delegate told that lunch at COP26 cost the same as a month's school fees for his daughter.

As well as providing free accommodation, most hosts became involved in more ways than they had anticipated, but this came with many of the rewards experienced in Servas. Conversations were shared while eating together, delegates cooked traditional meals from their own country. Linguistic challenges led to humorous moments. Local outings and traditional music were enjoyed. In addition to hosts, many other people became involved and helped financially, with transport and by translating.



Both Madagascans and Burkinabe people gave presentations about their countries. Delegates regularly expressed gratitude from the bottom of their hearts for the support, hospitality, friendship and generosity which they received. The Burkina Faso Minister for the Environment visited to thank the Waleys personally. Hosts and supporters were appreciative of the opportunity to contribute to the mission of COP26 by helping delegates from developing countries.

Madagascar is one of the countries hardest hit by the climate crisis and international agencies have declared the country's first large-scale famine caused by climate change. Burkina Faso is also seriously affected through desertification. The country has the unenviable distinction of having the 5th highest rate globally of falling GDP due to climate change.

Many delegates were surprised to be in homestays rather than hotels. The benefits of this have parallels in Servas. The whole experience has led to an understanding of other cultures. New friendships have been formed and plans made for new projects together. A reduced environmental footprint also resulted. The experience of hosting people during the conference has been transformative for some hosts and may provide a good opportunity to promote Servas to non-members. Perhaps an outcome of COP26 will be Burkina Faso's first Servas members.

...

Bike tour from Vienna to Budapest

Via Lake Neusiedl—Lake Balaton (September 7-21, 2021)

By Helen Heim Hueber

Vaccinated and equipped with Covid certificates, we (Helen and Patrick) dared the bike tour with our e-bikes from Vienna to Budapest via Lake Neusiedl - Lake Balaton, approx. 750 km. We were able to take the bikes with us on the direct trains Zurich-Vienna and Budapest-Zurich without any problem – but with a reservation.

For a few days we were accompanied by Ilus (Servas member) from Tatzmannsdorf/Austria. As a native Hungarian, she provided some accommodation in Hungary via Internet and telephone calls. So we were also relaxed that our bikes could be parked securely at night.

In Vienna we met with Hedwig and Lorenz in their wonderful organic garden in the middle of the city for breakfast and exchanged news; we have known each other for years and see each other often at international Servas meetings. Hedwig was currently busy with the theatre project: “Chernobyl, a chronicle of the future”.

With our e-bikes we were able to move on very well on signposted bike paths and discovered a lot in Vienna such as the city center with Ring-Rad-Rundweg (a cycling path with many sightseeing attractions), the Ottakringarea (16th District), the vineyards of Nussdorf/outside of Vienna as well as Danube Island (about 20 km long). The “Burgtheater” was also a highlight, where we saw “Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf”.



Cyclists from left: Patrick, Ilus, Helen
Below: Standing: Lorenz, Seated:
Helen, Patrick

Photo next page: The healing thermal water of Lake Heviz.





Through Praterpark we continued towards Podersdorf at Lake Neusiedl, located in a wonderful nature reserve and is a World Heritage Site. Ilus joined us in Sárvár, Hungary. In Heviz, I found the healing thermal water of Lake Heviz was wonderful for my knees. We enjoyed vineyards with fine wine, Tapolca with the underground waters as well as the remaining of three monasteries (monk cells from the year circa 1050) near Tihany. Szantod to Balatonkenese is very well developed for cyclists and signposted accordingly. It was often a risk to ride the sandy side roads with holes according to the “bikeline” bike tour book. Luckily, we were able to navigate with MapsMe. It was fun and an exciting adventure because there was so much

more of wonderful, “pot-flat” Hungary to experience.

Budapest has some well-developed cycle paths. Our Servas Day Hosts, Judit and Sandor, guided us through the history of Hungary and showed us many exciting locations in Budapest as well as in the countryside: artists’ city Szentendre and Esztergom. In Szentendre we visited the Kovács Margit Múzeum. Margit Kovács (1902-1977) is an outstanding ceramic artist, known for her colorful and lively depictions. From the 10th to the middle of the 13th century, Esztergom was the capital of the Kingdom of Hungary. The basilica is the second largest in the world.

Judit and Sandor took us to a classical concert with dedicated young musicians, who played pieces from Brahms, Schumann, Boellmann, Haydn to M. De Falla and Hermosa. Masks were hardly worn everywhere in Hungary. Unbelievable that this is so easily ignored. On the train and across the border to Austria masks were mandatory everywhere. For the return trip to Switzerland, we had to store our contact details online.

Full article: in English: https://67818771-4fa3-4ff0-980f-219541fa71ae.filesusr.com/ugd/25b4a3_b45b0acbf4c44d999dcdbefe6c6a1648.pdf
in German: www.servas.ch/files/ugd/25b4a3_352a06ab45984b0885c31757010e443d.pdf/

Long live Servas and we hope that younger people will follow !

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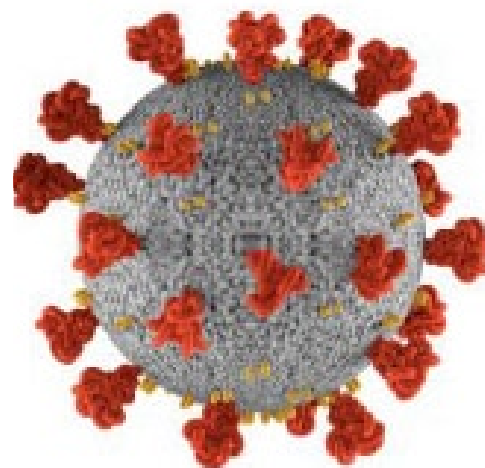
Covid-19 Policy Reminder

By Jonny Sågänger,
SI President

SI's global board SI Exco has approved a **COVID-19 Host and Travel Policy** for Servas members around the world, while local and regional governmental restrictions and safety concerns may still apply.

Summary of the policy:

- All government travel policies and restrictions related to Covid-19 in both the host and traveler countries must be respected for Servas travel.
- Additionally, hosts and travellers can ask each other regarding their Covid-19 related status **and expect a reply**.
- It is up to the host and traveller to decide if Covid-19 vaccinations, tests, or other considerations are needed before they meet, as long as it is not in contravention of the government policies referred to above.



- Travellers need to be aware of the Covid-19 rules and conditions in a country they plan to visit. Also check what your own country requires for your return trip.

The policy can be found in English, Spanish, French, Portuguese and Italian:
<https://servas.org/en/news/covid-19-host-and-travel-policy-servas>

Please remember:
Flexibility, self-care and care for others are the key ingredients for a happy experience.

The Covid-19 host and travel policy was initiated with a motion written by the SI Exco member Jim Leask and SI Exco associated board member Paul Nielsen.

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Hello dear Swiss Servas Pentecost meeting fans 2022. We would like to invite you for the next meeting on the long weekend of Pentecost, 2022 in Wildhaus (Eastern part of Switzerland). We would be pleased if you reserve June 4-6, 2022 now. Toggenburg is a very beautiful area and offers a variety of opportunities for hikes of varying degrees of difficulty. The Galluszentrum is a huge “self-catering house” with 125 beds, a big garden area with ping-pong table and barbecue sites.



We will rent it alone and can therefore assign a few people per room.

Servas members from abroad are very welcome.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at: corinne.doerig@gmx.ch

I am already looking forward to your sign ups. Registration deadline is mid-February 2022, but of course it's more fun to continue planning if you already announce that you will probably be back! —Corinne

To register: (choose language) https://en.servas.ch/_files/ugd/25b4a3_6606261a55a54f20b1f1c8262682de41.pdf

Deadline: February 15, 2022. Please complete this registration and return it by email to corinne.doerig@gmx.ch or by mail to Corinne Dörig, Bedastrasse 8, CH-9000 St.Gallen. Switzerland.

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Group of **SERVAS MONTAÑA** in Catalonia

By Luis Miguel Avendaño, Servas Spain

17 years ago, a small group of Servas members in Catalonia, who liked mountains and hiking, began to organize outings. First, taking night walks between Sabadell and the Montserrat Monastery (a distance of 32 kilometers), walking from 12 midnight until 10 or 11 a.m.

It was quite a tough challenge, since the last kilometers rose 600 meters in altitude to reach the monastery. Every year the number of participants increased, sometimes we had Servas members from France, Italy, Belgium, Israel, etc.

A short time later, Rafael Fernández, former regional coordinator, began a

“Great Walking Tour” that runs between the coastal city of Mataró in the province of Barcelona and ends in the South of France, in Prades de Conflent, passing the Canigó peak at 2,784 meters.

We hiked once a month, on a Saturday, for about 25 kilometers.

Starting with a small group of 7 people, within a few years we had added more than 35 people to the outings. So we decided to rent a bus to go all together and thus avoid taking private cars.

Based on this new way of organizing





outings, the number of attendees increased, and we currently get 30 and 50 hikers.

Servas members and sympathizers control the group during the walks. We must be very careful in some sections to: follow the signs, check maps and GPS, carry a first-aid kit, and control the group spacing using walkie talkies, etc.

So far we have walked more than 1,500 kilometers, while making friends, visiting landscapes of special beauty, and getting to know different types of plants and trees. We cross high mountains, rivers and valleys ... but the most beautiful thing we encounter is friendship. Hugs are the best sign of the joy of meeting. Respect and love for nature increase by sharing these interesting trails. Sometimes there is some danger or

difficulty, but up to now we have been very lucky and very careful so that each outing is a positive encounter for participants.

We encourage all Servas and supporters to organize this type of outings because it builds a friendlier world; sharing conversation, food and landscapes, and it reinforces the bonds of friendship that we carry in our hearts.

Currently we have started a new route "El Camino Catalan de Santiago" ("Camí Català de Sant Jaume" in Catalan language)

We respect the regulations dictated by COVID19.

If you pass through our region and want to learn more, or sign up, email us at: servas.grup.muntanya@gmail.com

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GENEVA
PEACE
WEEK

Geneva Peace Week

GENEVA
PEACE
WEEK

**By Kent Macaulay, Servas Canada member and
Servas International Rep to the UN in New York**

Geneva Peace Week (GPW) is “where bridges are built and silos are busted”. It is where persons and organizations can gather to exchange and learn from their real-life experiences in peacebuilding.

GPW is organized annually by the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform in cooperation with the Geneva office of the United Nations.

This year, GPW was held virtually from November 1 to 5, with the theme “From Seeds to Systems of Peace: Weathering Today’s Challenges”. Jeanne Devine and I—two of the five Servas International reps to the UN in New York—attended this virtual event.

Geneva Peace Week this year focused on new approaches and tools for peacebuilding in the midst of COVID-19 and climate change. “Hands-on” practitioners led the information sessions and workshops. There were four themes this year:

How can peacebuilding activities mesh with action on the climate emergency?

Today’s global challenges have heightened fear and insecurity, prompting some leaders to respond militarily and with harsh measures undermining human rights, sustainability and solidarity. What can peacebuilders do to “turn the tide”?



Is the digital world bringing us closer to peace or to war? How can peacebuilders harness new technology?

How can peacebuilding initiatives contribute to overcoming social and economic inequality?

From its very first days, Servas has emphasized peacebuilding. In fact, Servas founder Bob Luitweiler and his Danish friends

selected the name “Peacebuilders” for themselves in the late 1940s! In the GPW sessions, Jeanne and I noted that key elements of peacebuilding are multilateral initiatives, inclusion of women, empowerment of disadvantaged populations, concrete commitments

including funding, and long-term solutions. Servas and other non-government organizations can and must play a vital role in these peacebuilding endeavours.

You can watch a recording of many of the sessions at “Geneva Peace Week 2021” on www.youtube.com, and on all major podcast platforms. You may discover specific steps that you and other Servas members can take to strengthen peace in your own community or region.

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From Climate Change to Climate Emergency

How can we, Servas members, be part of the solution?

By Danielle Serres, SI UN Coordinator, Jeanne Devine, SI Main Rep at the UN NY, and Gopal Rajan, SI Rep at the UN NY

Sustainable Development Goal 13

Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

(See United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP]:

<https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/sustainable-development-goals/why-do-sustainable-development-goals-matter/goal-13>)

Every one of us can help limit climate change and take care of our planet. From the way we travel, to the electricity we use and the food we eat, we can make a difference. By making choices that have less harmful effects on the environment, we can be part of the solution and influence change.

- We, SI Reps at the UN, have some proposals :

- Create less pollution, avoid plastics,

use less energy, reduce travel by air and gasoline-powered vehicles

- Consume less meat and buy locally, and avoid food waste
- Join forces with like-minded organizations, including supporting Fridays for Future, the youth-driven movement inspired by Swedish activist Greta Thunberg

- Support Servas members in countries where they are more at risk
- Support local and national leaders who are committed to addressing climate change

- Support the faster disbursement of financial help to poor countries, to mitigate and adapt to climate change in a decisive manner.

What are your suggestions ?

...



Travels in Georgia, June 2021

By Christoph Kuhn, Servas Switzerland



Reading a novel about a Swiss cheesemaker who emigrated to Georgia prompted me to book a culture-and-hiking trip to the country. Georgia is currently the only country between the Black and Caspian Seas where things are reasonably peaceful. Moreover, the administration works well and infrastructures also function, although they are often dilapidated.

Because of the Corona virus, it was not clear until a few days before my departure whether the trip could take place. But then, our group of five finally arrived late at night at the Tbilisi airport where we were picked up by a local tour company: For ten days, Brigitte - a Swiss who emigrated to Georgia - and her Georgian husband Vacho, with a local driver, Kote, guided us through the rich Georgian landscape, scenery and culture. Thanks to Brigitte's long-standing relationships, we were guests of many locals, including a medicinal herb and silkworm breeder, as well as a wine growing cooperative, which offers supervised jobs for socially vulnerable young adults. The cooperative

presses their own wine according to 8,000-year-old techniques. Kote's father gave us the inside story of a massive tunnel construction being carried out with the participation of a Chinese company...

When my four travelling companions left on their return flight, the second part of my journey began. Shortly before my departure from Switzerland, a local Servas Georgia member enthusiastically invited me to stay. Mary Ellen Chatwin, the Georgian Servas National Secretary, sent her friendly taxi driver to pick me up on Sunday. I stayed with her for two days, which I spent sightseeing in Tbilisi, almost fainting because of the heat... temperatures up to 39°C.

Then I travelled in an air-conditioned streamlined **[photo]** train (with a maximum speed of 80 km/h) for six hours westwards, almost to the Black Sea, to a city called Zugdidi at the foot of the Caucasus Mountains.

From Zugdidi I took a *marshrutka* (a local vehicle that takes several



passengers) up winding roads at breakneck speed for almost four hours, from sea level up to the town of Mestia, the centre of Upper Svaneti situated at 1500 m. **(Photo: the municipal administration building).**

Mestia is where, in 1930, the Swiss adventure traveller, Ella Maillart, descended from her daring crossing of the Caucasus together with Russian Komsomol members (read her travelogue “Among Russian Youth: From Moscow to the Caucasus”). In the *marshrutka*, I met a friendly Israeli and an Egyptian couple, all of whom I encountered again during my mountain hikes.

I had pre-booked a good room before I left Tbilisi because family guesthouses in Upper Svaneti can be found on booking.com. The guesthouses are listed there due to a meaningful development project of the Servas Development Committee together with a German organisation: Empowerment of local families for soft tourism with support and information (“successfully hosting western tourists”).

Our guesthouse was very close to the centre of Mestia, with a balcony view of the many typical defence towers and the 4,858 m. Mount Tetnuldi.



(Photo: Mestia’s traditional towers with Mount Tetnuldi in the evening glow.)

I had two days to explore the area on foot, but not long enough to walk the busy Mestia trail up to the highest inhabited village in Europe, Ushguli, like my four acquaintances from the *marshrutka* did, but I got an extraordinary impression of the wider area. Wandering through the small, half-ruined villages of the Mulkhura Valley **[photo next page]** at the foot of Mount Tetnuldi, I almost felt like an ethnologist. [One who compares characteristics of peoples]. Indeed, I encountered villagers who still use sledges to transport goods that are similar to the one photographed by Ella Maillart in 1930.

After returning to Tbilisi - and again as Mary Ellen’s guest - I had another full day/ Through Mary Ellen’s mediation, I visited the former Swiss ambassador and his wife, now retired and living part-time in Georgia. They served me a rich Georgian aperitif, gave me a taste of their wine, and told me stories of their experiences in “hot” countries. That evening I attended the first Georgian



Servas meeting held since the Corona virus ban. Along with local Servas members, Mary Ellen had organised the meeting for my farewell.

The Georgia trip had an epilogue for me: At the Servas meeting I encountered a young Georgian mother and cellist who plays in the Tbilisi Opera Orchestra, who was a guest that evening. She had just won a competition to participate in a one-week workshop at the Yehudi Menuhin Academy in Saanen, Switzerland in the summer. However, she had no money for travel, accommodation, or food to attend the workshop. A Georgian Servas member arranged for the Yehudi Menuhin Academy to pay for her room and board, and then both Servas Georgia and Servas Switzerland members offered her plane fare. With prompt help from the Swiss Embassy for a visa and rapid support for her vaccinations, Sophie received her vaccinations and the necessary documents and tickets on time. **We funded her flight, including for the cello** (which takes almost full

fare!). In Switzerland a friend offered to drive her from the airport, first to visit her ailing mother who was receiving treatment in the Swiss Jura, and then to Gstaad, where she could attend the Master Class at the Menuhin Festival.

Thus, we thank the Servas Georgia members and others in Tbilisi, as well as those in Switzerland who acted speedily and made the dream of Sophie and her family come true.

My thanks go also to Vacho, Brigitte, Kosta and others in Georgia for an unforgettable tour with VB Tours; and particularly to Mary Ellen Chatwin who mentored me and gave me valuable tips!

Georgia invites you to further trips — I will be happy to provide further information!

Christoph Kuhn, kuhn1@gmx.ch

This is the travel agency in Georgia:

<https://georgienwbttours.com/>

You may find pictures here:

[https://www.dropbox.com/sh/5xvzxcg026qvkrh5/](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/5xvzxcg026qvkrh5/AAAFArIr_47Olc6Eg9P6P-aQa?dl=0)

[AAAFArIr_47Olc6Eg9P6P-aQa?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/5xvzxcg026qvkrh5/AAAFArIr_47Olc6Eg9P6P-aQa?dl=0)

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Why Singing?

Singing: “fil rouge” (red thread) that weaves throughout and unites all Servas meetings



By Luigi Uslenghi, Servas Italy

Red wine

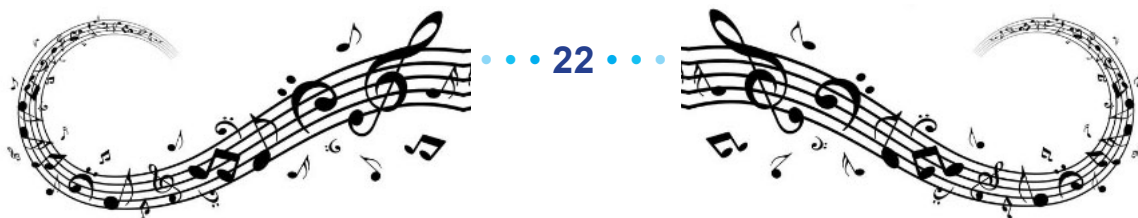
There were twenty-two of us that evening many years ago; people from Italy, France, Switzerland, Germany, Slovenia and Croatia. A small alpine hut welcomed us after the long day of hiking from one valley to another. Tired but extraordinarily happy we shared a revitalizing dinner. And then we sang, as always during “Sentierinsieme”, but on that occasion the famous Servas spirit that always accompanies our events, was even more intense, perhaps due to the crystal-clear air of the mountains. Different languages mingled in the succession of songs until, silently, the manager of the hut appeared, carrying a large tray with glasses and placing a big bottle of red wine in the center of the table. He said: “Keep singing! It’s on the house!”. And there was applause, not only ours, but – as we look around – also from the other guests of the hut. We thus discovered that we had an audience that listened to us and joined us. And the manager was happy and offered us wine so that we would not cease too soon to keep all the company in the room happy. Alpe Devero, July 1993.

Emotions

It was an example – among many – of the social function of singing. In Servas we have always sung. Wherever and whenever the opportunity arose and always with great enthusiasm. Because singing is beautiful. Singing unites. Singing is freedom. Through music and singing you express emotions that you would not know how to communicate in any other way. Singing involves the whole body and is one of the most powerful means of expression. Singing is a real nourishment on a spiritual level. What is better than singing to express the joy of meeting others? And Servas entails meeting people.

Fil rouge

I remember a Servas report after a trip to Japan many years ago. Adelia and Massimo, Italians from Rimini, said that always during their long stay in the land of the rising sun they had been asked to sing. Our two friends tried to satisfy this request that was welcomed with enthusiasm. It was not an isolated experience. In the history of Servas there have been moments dedicated to



singing. We could say that singing together constitutes a sort of “fil rouge” that has always accompanied Servas, the thread that ideally unites all our meetings any time and any place.

Ashram

How can I forget that week at the Anand NiKetan Ashram, located in a tribal area of Gujarat, India, during the Servas International Conference held between December 1980 and January 1981? On that occasion, it was mainly the inhabitants of the nearby villages who offered us moments of traditional dances and songs, which in part I was able to record on a cassette tape. And among many of my distant memories there is also Israel in 1983, at the Naharya Conference.

Also our night time singing performances with Evren on the roof of the hotel in Istanbul in 2002 on the occasion of the Eurasia Meeting, a stone’s throw from Hagia Sophia and the minarets of the Blue Mosque. And earlier, in 1992, at the Servas International Conference in Chedigny, France. And in Askov, Denmark, in 1999 for the 50th anniversary of Servas.

And in all the “Summer Universities, Servas get together”, as in Kent in 2000 and among the forests of the Masurian lakes in Poland in 2003. Earlier and later, everywhere, from the Urals, to Korea, from Argentina to Canada, to Australia

Servas song

Creativity was never lacking in Servas, and back in 1972 Barbara Whitehead, a nice English lady, thought it best to compose an anthem of Servas, which we occasionally re-propose in meetings. Our “Servas Song”, in English, however, has the refrain in Esperanto: “Fratoj, ni servas tutta la mond ‘... we serve the whole world. For the 1986 Servas International Conference



in Rome, I proposed to publish a booklet of songs to be distributed among the participants, asking for the contribution of everyone from all over the world. A lot of suggestions came, including one from an Irish community who proposed witty lyrics to the notes of the song “America” from West Side Story. The booklet was entitled Cantare - International Song Book - à l’amitié, l’amour, la joie.

Sentierinsieme

In 1985, I launched the idea of a meeting in the Alps with Italian and French friends. I called it “Sentierinsieme” (Pathways together) and for that first occasion I prepared some sheets of paper with many photocopied lyrics of songs. We didn’t have personal computers yet so we had to prepare them with simple means. We were about fifty in that small Piedmont valley on the French border. And we sang in the evening, tired after a day of walking, but happy to be together and unite our voices. And so for thirty-five years we met with “Sentierinsieme” in the

Alps in Italy, France, Switzerland, Germany. Always finding time to sing: around a table in a warm and cozy hut and sometimes outside, around a fire. Thirty-five meetings, year after year: the last one in Switzerland in July 2019, under the walls of the Jungfrau, with the help of the song booklet prepared by Bea and her Swiss friends and with the accompaniment of Guido on the keyboard

Alpe Adria

Then on the eastern end of the Alps, in 1989, we accepted a proposal from Dorothea and launched “Alpe Adria”, inviting our Italian, Austrian and then Yugoslavian Servas friends to Tarvisio, on the border between Italy, Austria and present-day Slovenia. A Servas tradition that has expanded over time to other countries such as Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, as well as Slovenia and Croatia, with one meeting in Switzerland. Alpe Adria has always been – year after year – an extraordinary opportunity for participation through music and singing.

Giselle

Before the 1989 Servas International Conference, I was welcomed in Montreal by Giselle who took me on her big Honda motorcycle to her home. That day at the baseball stadium, she, alone in the big green field, started singing first the USA national anthem and then the Canadian one. I discovered that I had landed in the house of a celebrity: a very talented singer who in the evening – after taking me on a motorcycle to the hills – went over with me her repertoire of popular songs, including “Bella Ciao”, “Azzurro”, “Volare” as a tribute to the Italian guest and then a lot of French-Canadian and American songs, many by Bob Dylan. She also gave me a booklet of local songs and on the last evening of the Conference I saw her

again acclaimed by the Servas audience present at the table: “at the microphone, our talented and nice Giselle Crepeau!” An evening of singing to say goodbye to Montreal.

On the phone

I have always loved singing and I have also learned a lot from friends of Servas ...

Agnieszka from Wroclaw the traditional “Góralu”, a Hungarian friend “Megkötöm lovamat”, Laurent of Annecy “Se canto” in langue d’oc, Sylvie from Quebec, her “Gens du Pays”, a dear French friend who had lived in China for many years, the traditional “Moli Hua”, and Mariella, actress-singer, my dear friend from Perugia.

We still sing as soon as we see or hear each other, even on the phone. With singing we have also tried to sympathize with oppressed peoples, by disseminating song lyrics, videos, translations of the protest and traditional songs of the people of our beloved Belarus.

Social Internet

Today there is also a Facebook group, “Servas singing”, active since 2009: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/58714192268>. And on the internet there is a site, “Servas singing” <https://sites.google.com/site/servassinging>, with over 300 songs, always updated, with lyrics, translations especially in English and Italian, information, videos and musical scores. It is a tool to use. So use it!

...to sing is to remember

...memories of dear faces and dear voices

...to sing is to love

...hand in hand, face to face

...to sing is to communicate

...universal language of all times

*Singing round a table, under the stars,
on the roads of the world.*

—Luigi Uslenghi, Servas Italy_

• • •

100+ Michaels

By Michael Johnson, SINB Editor



Last year I found a Servas couple in New Zealand with the same first names as my wife and me. I did another online search recently and found over 100 “Michaels” in the Servas world. Thanks to an artist and an author for sharing with us.

The artist Michael was not home when I reached him: “I am in NYC now to participate in the New York Psychedelic Film Festival for the second time. Last year it was with my film *Lucid*, and now with my film *TreeBirth*.” The author Michael says we need a “sound heart” as much as a sound mind.

Can you find members online with ties to you: name, location, hobby, job?

Michael Ben Abu — a multidisciplinary artist and a Servas member from Tel Aviv since 1998

As child on Moshav (village) Devora in the north of Israel near Nazareth and Armageddon, where I was born and raised, I recall sitting for hours drawing mud circles in the clay soil of the Jezre’el Valley, which was my naïve way to connect with energy and meditative space.

Later, after finishing army service as a paratrooper in the IDF [Israeli Defense Force], I went on to get a B.Sc. in Agriculture and an M.A. in Judaic Studies and Informal Education. I also studied a bodywork method based on foot analysis and physical body therapy. This led me to learn and eventually teach clairvoyant meditation.

I joined Servas in 1998, and since then I have been hosting and visiting Servas members from all over the world, USA, Europe, Australia and the Far East.

I work at our national forest organization, KKL_JNF, where we fight global warming by

planting trees in our arid country, mostly in the desert.

At the age of 40, I started to paint as an autodidact, and I graduated Bezalel Art Academy in Jerusalem in 2015 at 55 years old. Since then, I wear the many hats of a multidisciplinary artist: trilingual poet, painter, and sculptor, video and installation artist; teacher of clairvoyant meditation; Sufi spiritual dancer, storyteller, performer, collector, traveler, cook



and host. I love to play with language and words, as well as the language of color in various mediums.

Covid-19 slowed travel, yet it gave me much more free time to create and exhibit, both online and in real, in between lockdowns.

I do hope that we shall start to see soon more visitors, and to be able to travel freely and visit Servas friends all over the world with the great spirit of Servas Hospitality.

The lives of your children

By Michael Ben Abu

www.facebook.com/michaelbenabu

The lives of your children
are the lives they were meant to live.
It is not your life.
Let them live their life
with courage, calm, acceptance
to the fullest.
Allow your children to learn their lessons,
experience their experiences.
Safeguard and protect them to the right extent.
Allow them to fall, be there to help them rise,
embrace them as they rise, embrace them as
they stumble, if they want and need it.
Give them the tools to live.
Give them the freedom to live their lives.
Let go.

• • •

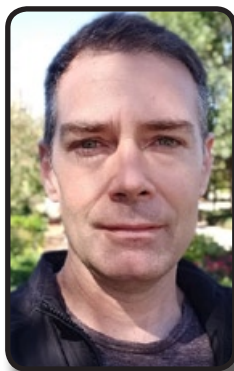
Do You Have a Sound Heart ?

By Michael Vincent Moore

I'm Michael, one of over 100 Servas members named Michael (or Mike).

I joined Servas about 5 years ago when I started traveling on my own for nearly 3 years. At the time, I was living in Scotland, now I am in Canada: I have dual citizenship, Canadian and British.

I have stayed with several members of Servas while traveling and really enjoyed the experience. What brought me to join, was mainly the Servas purpose which I feel for deeply: *"to help build world peace, goodwill and understanding"*. In fact, part of the reason why I went off for so long, was that I wanted to touch upon deeper



experiences, and write about them. I have been a lifelong learner of life, and I write about love, emotional intelligence, and the values of making ourselves the best we can, and from that, how we can make the whole world better in the process.

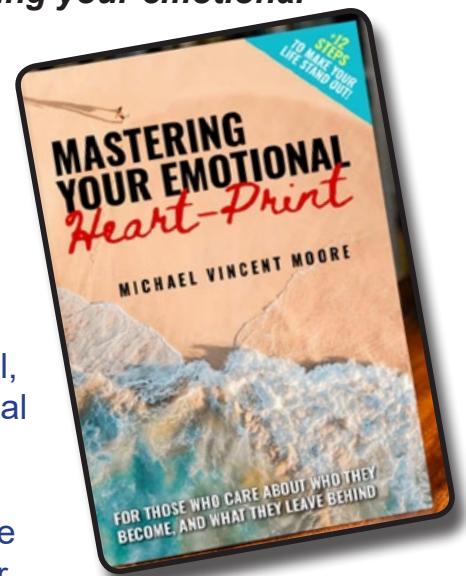
Here's a short passage from my second book that I recently published on Amazon, entitled ***"Mastering your emotional Heart-Print"***:

"Just as a successful life should be measured by how good we feel about ourselves and others in general, and our emotional heart-print, being of sound heart should take precedence over being of sound mind. Not that the mind is not important, but we use our minds to create, and if our hearts are not part of the picture in a healthy way, not equal in participation, then what we create will be empty of meaning, and that is the legacy we will leave behind, emptiness and corruption. So without first ensuring that we are of sound heart before attempting to create anything in life, before setting ourselves on our chosen path, then how can we trust in what we do, in regards to it having a positive contribution in the world?"

This is a link to my website: <https://theeqrevolution.org/about-the-e-q-revolution/>

I wish everyone a great Holiday Season, and an even greater 2022!

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NEW KEY PERSONS

SERVAS SAO TOME E PRINCIPE

Servas is happy to welcome a new national Servas group in Africa, **São Tomé e Príncipe**.

This small island nation off the Atlantic coast of Central Africa consists



of archipelagos around the two main islands Sao Tome and Principe. It is located 225 km off the northwestern coast of Gabon. The official language is Portuguese.

Editor's Note: Just 5 km. from the Equator, São Tomé has year-round lows and highs ranging from 20C to 30C.

The Servas Contact person for Sao Tome and Principe, Edgener Espírito Santo, is the only member (DH) but we hope to have more in the future.

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SERVAS ITALY



Italy members from left are:

Gino Pomilla, Prisca Salmieri, Antonio Calvagno, Gregorio Lombardo, Lucia Re, Raffaella Rota, Giovanni Tarditi.

The General Assembly of Servas Italy was held in October 2021. A new Executive Committee has been elected:

Lucia Re, National Secretary

Raffaella Rota, National Deputy and Youth and Family Contact

Prisca Salmieri, National Treasurer

Gregorio Lombardo, National Peace Secretary

Antonio Calvagno, Membership Secretary

Gino Pomilla, Host List Coordinator

Giovanni Tarditi, Communication Manager

Outgoing board members:

Alfredo Rubino (NS), Antonia

Cocozza (Deputy), Mauro

Pellegrino and Francesco Castracane

Note: As to the statutes of Servas Italy a board member can only serve two terms (6 years)

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SERVAS FRANCE



The General Assembly of Servas France was held in November 2021.

New members who joined the board are, top row from left:

Marie-Brigitte Sarbach, President/
National Secretary

Isabelle Girard, National Vice
President

Geneviève Aubert, General Secretary
Bottom row, from left:

Christiane Durand-Gasselin, National
Treasurer

Chantal Larue-Bertin, National
Treasurer; until 31/12/2021

Laurent Lugand, coordinators'
representative

Michel Ménard, coordinators'
representative.

Outgoing board members: Erick
Lefort (President), Jean-Marc Eyot,
France Fourdau and Magali Morel.

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SERVAS SRI LANKA

After many years of inactivity we are happy to announce that Servas Sri Lanka recently restarted.

Sandhy Ayetileke Gunawardena is the Main Contact for Servas Sri Lanka

Thank you
Sandhy for joining
the international
Servas family and
good luck.

Now there are 4
active members in
this country but we
are sure Servas Sri
Lanka will grow.

— • —



SI DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

New members joined the SI Development Committee (DC) recently. As to the Statutes of SI, five persons have been elected or re-elected at the GA of 2018 in Korea, however in 2021 DC had only two members left.

Actual members of DC:

Elected members at the GA of 2018

- Fidèle Rutayisire , Rwanda (re-elected)

- Pamela Yang, Taiwan (elected)

Members appointed by EXCO in
2021:

- Leandro Hoyos Urrea, Colombia

- Janek Dzierzawski, Poland

- Wolfgang Sctapelfeldt, Germany



Photo: members of DC from left: • Fidèle • Pamela • Leandro • Janek • Wolfgang

Former members of DC:

In 2021 we had to say goodbye to our beloved friend Ewa Dzierzawska (Poland), convenor of DC

Pablo Colangelo (Argentina) elected in 2018 left DC in 2019

Lilly Kerekes (Mexico) elected in 2018 left DC in 2020.

Thank you outgoing board members; your work and commitment for Servas is really appreciated and Servas is grateful for what you have realized.

Congratulations and a warm welcome to the new elected, reelected and appointed key persons. Special welcome to the new National Servas group and to the reborn Servas group.

We wish you all good luck and we thank you sincerely for your contribution and involvement.

—Rita Dessauvage,
Convenor SI Dolphin Team,
Member Servas Belgium &
Luxemburg.

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Cultural News

By Michael Johnson, editor [8 Dec. 2021]

Tell us of your culture. Please send news from your area to: newsletter@servas.org

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Recently more than 40 camels were disqualified from a beauty contest because their owners injected them with Botox.

Some breeders have stretched the lips and noses of camels, used collagen lip fillers, artificially enlarged their muscles with hormones and inflated body parts using rubber bands.

The best-looking camels can be auctioned off for millions. Prize money totals US\$90 million.

...



Well Remembered

Victor Vélez Bermejo (1942-2021)

By Juan Carlos Arias, Servas Spain

It's sad to say goodbye to friends. Together with one's partner, they are the only people we choose in life: not parents, brothers, brothers-in-law, neighbors, bosses, colleagues.

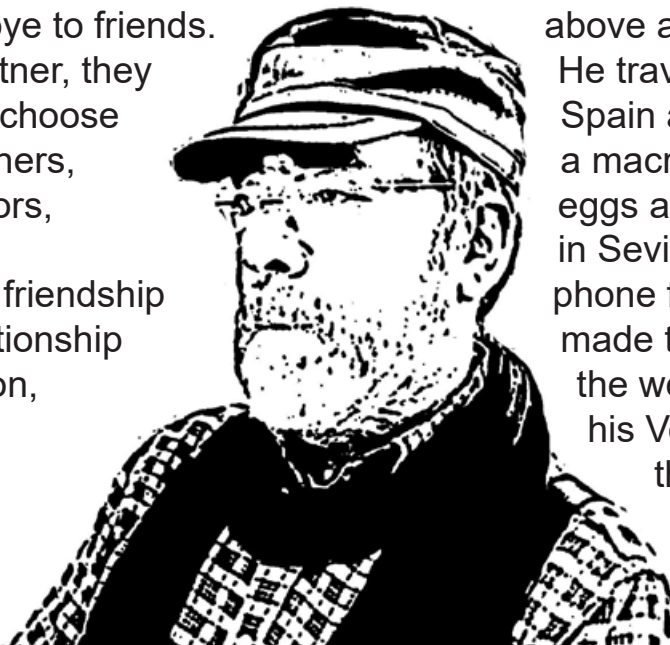
Carl Rogers defined friendship correctly: 'affective relationship based on communication, understanding, mutual support, affection and harmony'.

Being a friend of Víctor Vélez Bermejo (1942-2021) I do not write with neutrality.

Victor was a cultured, traveled, elegant and decisive Sevillian. No one was indifferent to his individual aura. His stories, concerns, claims, travel stories and his undertakings were out of the ordinary.

The intense life of such an unrepentant gathering and passionate being, was drawn on the difficulties that he experienced during the postwar period, repression and the hunger that devastated Spain, that he had to live in his adolescence and youth. His deprivations were balanced by his taste for good wines, the best flamenco, and the company that he enriched.

His go-getter spirit, as he called it, made him a worker, businessman and,



above all, an entrepreneur. He traveled throughout Spain as a salesman, ran a macro-warehouse for eggs and was a pioneer in Seville among mobile phone franchises. He made the best trips around the world after selling his Volvo and skipping the return ticket. He explored destinies and daily life far from his home, close to the old La Ranilla Prison.

His daughter Laura adds that he was a good friend many, helpful, a good father and observed the principles or ethics that did not allow any flaw. The militancy of the struggle for peace escalated him, from Andalusia to the presidency of SERVAS Spain. During his tenure, the members multiplied, and he organized international congresses in remote places such as La Carlota (Córdoba), where almost 300 attendees revolutionized the town. They even disturbed the Civil Guard itself, who believed that so many strange people, fighting for peace by giving traveling hospitality, could subvert the public order of such a peaceful town in Cordoba.

R.I.P. Victor!

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SERVAS, A GLOBAL COMMUNITY WITHIN VIRTUAL REACH

Discover the Servas community here on the world wide web:

Social Media	Location	Administered by:
Official website	https://servas.org/	Servas International
Facebook page	https://www.facebook.com/Servas.International/	Jonny Sågänger, Carla Kristensen
Facebook group “Servas International”	(members only) https://www.facebook.com/groups/117649068294944/	Arnoud Philipppo, Paige LaCombe, Mr. Hiren Goradia
Servas group “Travelling for Peace”	https://www.facebook.com/groups/servas/	Jonny Sågänger, Carla Kristensen, Park Jae Kwoang
Servas Peace Page	https://www.facebook.com/groups/ServasPeacePage/	Paige LaCombe, Danielle Serres, Raleigh LaCombe Tomlinson, Francisco Salomón
Instagram	Ex: servasturkiye, servasmexico, servaspeaceschool, servasbritain, servaschile, servasbrasil, servaspeace, servas_australia, servasgiovani, servas_italia, servasiran, servasportugal, servasfrance, servasyouth, servas_youth_in_africa, and many more	Many Servas groups or teams
Twitter		
Servas International president on twitter.com	https://twitter.com/servaspresident?lang=en	SI President
@ServasI	https://twitter.com/servasi?lang=en	Servas Britain Regional Co-ordinator, Area N (Yorkshire)
Blogs & national websites	See “Servas Websites” at www.servas.org	
Digital Communication		
SI News Bulletin	https://servas.org/en/newsletters-bulletins	SI President and the SI Media & Communication Team
Servas Confluence	A digital co-working and cooperation platform for internal Servas volunteers.	SI Tech Team and SI Exco

The SI News is sent in digital format to all National Secretaries and Key international People. **We encourage them to distribute it widely.** It is a quarterly publication containing articles of interest such as communications from SI ExCo, stories of Servas experiences, articles about Peace, Servas and the UN.

—By Carla Cristensen (SI VP) & Jonny Sågänger (SI President)

ABOUT THE SERVAS INTERNATIONAL NEWS BULLETIN

The Servas International News Bulletin (SINB) is a newsletter made by and for the members of our Servas community. It contains a brief report about current issues and decisions.

Editors & Newsletter Coordinators:

Michael Johnson, Editor & Graphic Design

Picot Cassidy, Servas Britain

Itzcóatl (Jorge) Rendon, Mexico

Translators: Isabelle Girard, Lilly Kerekes

What would you like to read about in the SI News Bulletin? Please let us know.

Email: newsletter@servas.org

We encourage Servas key people around the world to forward this bulletin to individual members. Feel free to quote this bulletin but please mention Servas International News Bulletin as the source.

SI EXCO 2018—2022**PRESIDENT:**

Jonny Sångänger president@servas.org

VICE-PRESIDENT:

Carla Kristensen vicepresident@servas.org

TREASURER:

Radha B. Radhakrishna treasurer@servas.org

GENERAL SECRETARY:

Kiat Yun Tan generalsecretary@servas.org

MEMBERSHIP & TECHNOLOGY SECRETARY:

Jim Leask & Paul Nielsen mts@servas.org

PEACE SECRETARY:

Paige LaCombe peacesecretary@servas.org

**ABOUT SERVAS INTERNATIONAL**

Servas International is an international, non-profit, non-governmental federation of national Servas groups, supporting an international network of hosts and travellers.

Our network aims to help build world peace, goodwill and understanding by offering opportunities for personal contacts between people of different cultures, backgrounds and nationalities.